

CLAIMS:

1. A handheld data management device for field assessments, comprising:

memory for storing field assessment programs and related data;

microprocessor for executing field assessment programs;

field assessment software stored within said memory;

user interface for enabling a user to interact with said field assessment software; and

synchronization means for providing data to and retrieving data from remote computing resources.

2. The handheld data management device of claim 1, further comprising a positioning module, for providing handheld device location identification.

3. The device of claim 1, further comprising a wireless communication module for providing access to data from remote resources to said device.

4. The handheld data management device of claim 1, further comprising a positioning module, for providing handheld device location identification.

5. The device of claim 4, further comprising a wireless communication module for providing access to data from remote resources to said device.

6. The device of claim 1, further comprising a wireless communication module for providing access to data from remote resources to said device.

7. The handheld data management device of claim 6, further comprising a positioning module, for providing handheld device location identification.

8. A handheld field assessment device, comprising:

a field assessment program module for analyzing input data associated with a field assessment, analyzing said data, and rendering output data in response to said input data and said analyzing;

a positioning module, for providing handheld device location identification; and

a wireless communication module for providing access to remote data resources to said device.

9. The handheld field assessment device of claim 8 wherein said program module comprises at least one of:

- construction industry analysis program;
- HVAC analysis program;
- project management program;
- equipment readiness program;
- troubleshooting program;
- inventory tracking program;
- inventory ordering program;
- legal investigation program;
- multi-users function coordination program.

10. A method of conducting a field assessment using a handheld data management device, comprising:

- providing access to a industry-specific field assessment program module;
- executing said program module to conduct a field assessment;
- providing field-specific information required by said program module for said program module to render data from said module useful in support of said assessment; and
- retrieving data from said handheld data management device in support of said assessment.

11. The method of claim 10, further comprising:
providing data to a remote resource for analysis;
retrieving enhanced data from said remote resource for use in conducting the field assessment.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein data provided to a remote resource is a query message from a field assessor to a remote counselor and enhanced data from said remote resource is a response message provided by said remote counselor in response to said query message.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein said response message includes supporting data files.

14. The method of claim 10, further comprising accessing a remote data resource for retrieving data in support of said assessment.

15. The method of claim 14 wherein said data resource is a third party database accessible over the Internet.

16. The method of claim 10, further comprising:
providing two-way communication between remote computing means and handheld data management devices to facilitate real-time access to remote programs, assistance and/or information related to the field assessment being undertaken by using a handheld data management device user.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein data is provided to said remote resource in the form of a query message from a field assessor to a remote counselor and enhanced data from said remote resource is a response message provided by said remote counselor in response to said query message.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein said response message includes supporting data files.

19. The method of claim 10, further comprising:

accessing a remote data resource for retrieving data in support of said assessment.

20. The method of claim 19 wherein said data resource is a third party database accessible over the Internet.

21. The method of claim 10, wherein said field assessment program comprising at least one of the following:

construction industry;

HVAC;

project management;

equipment readiness;

troubleshooting;

inventory tracking;

inventory ordering;

legal investigations;

multi-users functions.

22. The method of claim 21, further comprising:

providing data to a remote resource for analysis;

retrieving enhanced data from said remote resource for use in conducting the field assessment.

23. The method of claim 22, wherein data provided to a remote resource is a query message from a field assessor to a remote counselor and enhanced data from said remote resource is a response message provided by said remote counselor in response to said query message.

24. The method of claim 23, wherein said response message includes supporting data files.

25. The method of claim 21, further comprising:

accessing a remote data resource for retrieving data in support of said assessment.

26. The method of claim 25 wherein said data resource is a third party database accessible over the Internet.

27. The method of claim 21, further comprising:

providing two-way communication between remote computing means and handheld data management devices to facilitate real-time access to remote programs, assistance and/or information related to the field assessment being undertaken by using a handheld data management device user.

28. The method of claim 27, wherein data is provided to said remote resource in the form of a query message from a field assessor to a remote counselor and enhanced data from said remote resource is a response message provided by said remote counselor in response to said query message.

29. The method of claim 28, wherein said response message includes supporting data files.

30. A method of conducting a assessment of a field problem by an assessor utilizing a handheld data management device, comprising:

- obtaining direction to a field problem using positioning and navigation means provided through said handheld data management device;
- starting an assessment program associated with the field problem;
- providing specific information required by the assessment program and related to the field problem;
- analysis of said specific information by said handheld data management device; and
- rendering output by said handheld data management device for use in support of said field problem.

31. The method of claim 30 wherein said field problem and said assessment program are related to one of:

- construction industry appraisal;
- HVAC assessment;
- project management;
- equipment readiness assessment;
- troubleshooting;
- inventory tracking;
- inventory ordering;
- legal investigation support;
- multi-user assessment coordination.

32. The method of claim 31, further comprising identifying the field problem by providing information of at least one of customer identity, problem location, assessment date.

32. The method of claim 31, wherein if said problem is a construction appraisal said method further comprises providing information of at least one of customer identity, problem location, assessment date, project start date.

33. A method utilizing a handheld data management device for inventory management, comprising:

starting an inventory program from a handheld data management device, said program used to ensure that the proper inventory will be provided prior to undertaking a daily service schedule;

identifying service schedule requirements;

synchronize the schedule with inventory data accessible by said inventory manager;

assessment by said inventory manager of schedule requirements and available inventory;

and

providing the technician with inventory availability status based on inventory needs identified in said schedule.

34. The method of claim 33 wherein inventory needed and available for said service schedule are reserved through said program to an inventory supplier, wherein needed inventory is taken to service calls.

35. A method of conducting legal investigation using a handheld data management device, comprising:

starting a legal investigation program;

identifying the subject matter for a legal investigation;

obtaining guidance regarding performing a compliant legal investigation.

36. The method of claim 35 wherein said guidance is tailored to requirements of a jurisdiction.

37. The method of claim 35 further comprising communication said data entered into said handheld data management device to a remote resource for analysis.

38. A method of conducting legal investigation utilizing data from handheld data management devices, comprising:

receiving investigation data associated with a legal investigation from at least one remote handheld data management device;

analyzing said investigation data; and

rendering analysis results.

39. The method of claim 38 wherein rendering analysis results further comprises providing legal investigation shortfall information to remote handheld data management device associated with the shortfall.

40. The method of claim 38 wherein rendering analysis results further comprises updating and formatting for representation and distribution to plural case workers.